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BOOK REVIEWS

The Child's Mind, Its Growth and Training. By W. E. URWICK. London: Edward Arnold; New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1907. Pp. xi+269.

This little volume is a discussion of certain problems in the psychology of education rather than a study in genetic psychology, as its name would indicate. It is the learning process particularly that engages the author's attention and his treatment of the rather loosely related topics is quite informal and most suggestive. In spite of this the net outcome of the book is a little disappointing. It is rather in its scattered suggestions and its point of view than in its completed statements that it has most value. The reader feels that the author is on a good trail but needs to follow it out further. He happily escapes from many of the traditional stereotyped concepts of psychology, especially of the type in vogue in most educational circles. It is this freedom with which he grasps the educational problem and uses the psychological machinery as his tool in interpreting it that constitutes one of the novel things about the book. "The educator," he says, "is, in the first place, concerned with the process of learning, and the conditions best suited to it, and in the second with the meaning of the term 'character' and the best means of training it; and he is perfectly justified in treating psychological data from the point of view most suited to his purposes, and need not concern himself if this does not exactly correspond to the trend of psychology as a science" (p. 56).

He lays particular emphasis upon the problem or conscious purpose in the learning process, upon the impulsive or conative character of consciousness as crystallized and given meaning through the working-out of the purpose, upon the development of meaning and value generally through the child's assuming an active attitude toward his world. He also lays stress upon the significance of spontaneity, of free play of mental process as over against formal method, and points out the place of the social context in this development of meanings.

Education he conceives as more than the mere acquisition of facts. It is rather the development of meanings, of impulses, of the power to act and to use. His interpretation of the knowledge process, as related to the acquisition of meanings and motives, is most suggestive and sound. His discussion on pp. 143-49 is an implicit but excellent constructive criticism of the Herbartian formal theory of learning. His treatment of "Imagination and Reasoning," chaps. vii and viii, is particularly worthy of note. His underlying thought throughout is that of the active, appropriative child, who grows intellectually by facing problems both within and without the school. The task confronting the teacher is not that of producing reasoning, for example, but of furnishing fruitful fields for its exercise. Psychic processes, in other words, go on with or without the teacher and the best growth occurs under conditions which furnish opportunity for their free, spontaneous exercise. And yet passivity and repression too often prevail in the schoolroom. "Forms of expression, instead of being found and gradually perfected by pupils themselves, are given ready-made by teachers or text-book, and repeated until known by pupils. . . . Pro-

longed subjection to such teaching produces a type of mind only too common nowadays, which is the despair of the real educator. . . . The idea the pupil has of home work is to pore over a text till certain phrases or names have clung to the memory; in school his mind is as torpid as a stagnant pond. . . . Most disastrous of all, the pupil is all the time under the impression he is doing his best, and his idea of work becomes synonymous with his idea of drudgery" (p. 158).

Altogether we commend the book as a most suggestive presentation of certain phases of educational theory from the point of view of functional or activity psychology.

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The Life of Alice Freeman Palmer. By GEORGE HERBERT PALMER. New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1908. Pp. 354. Price, \$1.50 net.

To have one's life a definite contribution to the significant complex forces in modern social life and then to be the subject of a biography so well formed that it perpetuates that contribution is the fortune of few men and of fewer women. This is one of the rare books which one wishes to share with many others. Opportunities for it to be a pleasure and help to readers, young and old, will not be uncommon. We do not have many educational biographies of distinctly literary character—in this case there is not only this merit but the school in wide range is only a major interest in the larger social situation.

Many friends of Alice Freeman feared when she married that her larger usefulness would be lost in her personal and family life. While all had occasion to realize how far this was from the actual result, yet the later chapters of the present book surprise even those who were close at hand, by the multifarious interests and activities which were forwarded by Mrs. Palmer during the fifteen years of her married life. Professor Palmer discusses these as well as the questionings referred to and his own part in her life with such frankness and yet delicacy as will serve to remove the last doubt. Had the work no other function than to serve as a contribution to the all too small shelf of books outside of fiction dealing with life in marriage, it would deserve and receive a wide reading. The reasons given for the writing—"the insatiable love of love, the general desire for portraiture, the rights of history"—are followed by the sentence, "Since I can no longer talk with her, I would talk of her and get the comfort of believing that even now without me she may not be altogether perfect."

The life is treated in four sections—family life, from birth, 1855, to the time of entering Windsor Academy, 1865; the expansion of her powers, up to her graduation from Michigan University in 1876; her service of others, up to her marriage in 1887, and lastly, expression of herself, up to her death in 1902. In each period one is impressed by the problems it contained, such as hardship, decision between pressing responsibilities and opportunities, also by the persons and places concerned. All these are vividly present to the reader—one does not need to know Ann Arbor, Wellesley, Cambridge, and Boxford to share in the home sense given to them. The extent to which it is made pos-